



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
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News Release

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St. Paul man charged in alleged prostitution operation

A 41-year-old St. Paul man was charged last week in federal court with transporting illegal immigrants and using them to engage in prostitution throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Liqing Liu was charged Dec. 14 with one count of transportation of person to engage in prostitution. The criminal complaint was issued following Liu's arrest Dec. 13.

According to an affidavit filed by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), investigators learned that individuals had been transporting nationals from various Asian countries for the purpose of engaging in prostitution. The prostitution occurs in both apartments and businesses that advertise as "massage" parlors.

ICE received an anonymous letter on Aug. 8, 2007, outlining the prostitution operation and stated that Chinese women work at the brothel for two to three weeks and then are rotated out of Minnesota. Investigators searched classified advertisements in local newspapers and the Internet advertising for, in and out call "massage" service.

The affidavit alleges that the brothel consistently changed locations, and officers observed activity consistent with a prostitution business at several Minneapolis residences, motels in Bloomington, Golden Valley, Plymouth and Minneapolis and at an office in St. Louis Park. The affidavit alleges that Liu arranges for the women to come to Minnesota from California, New York and Texas, and that he picks them up at the airport.

If convicted, Liu faces a potential maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by ICE and the police departments of Bloomington, Minneapolis, Plymouth, St. Louis Park and St. Paul, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Erika R. Mozangue.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked annually across international borders for involuntary servitude or use in the sex trades.

An estimated 14,500 to 17,500 are trafficked within the U.S. each year. According to the Justice Department, the Twin Cities metropolitan area is one of the 15 largest human trafficking centers in the nation.

Earlier this month ICE launched a public service campaign targeting human trafficking. In the last three fiscal years, ICE initiated 958 nationwide investigations into human trafficking organizations that resulted in 520 arrests, 339 criminal indictments and 281 criminal convictions, as well as the seizure of more than \$9 million. If you suspect trafficking activity in your community, call 866-DHS-2ICE.